

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. I would like to call the senators' attention to the area under the north balcony. Senator Wehrbein would like to recognize Dr. Gill Wright, III of Syracuse who is serving as our doctor of the day today on behalf of the Nebraska Academy of Family Physicians. Would you please rise Dr. Gill. Thank you for being with us. We'll proceed now with General File, LB 305.

CLERK: Madam President, 305 was introduced by Senator McKenzie, Bohlke, Day. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 12 of this year, at that time referred to the Transportation Committee. The bill was advanced to General File. I do have committee amendments pending by the Transportation Committee, Madam President.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Senator Kristensen.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Madam President, members of the Legislature. This bill, I'm sure that Senator McKenzie and the other cosponsors can give you an adequate or a very adequate description of how the bill works and what we're doing. The committee amendments do a couple of things and I think it's important as we have the discussion this morning on this bill to understand what it really does. We are talking about the telephone relay system which is for people who are impaired, hearing impaired people and who need assistance. The American Disabilities Act requires us to have some sort of system in 1990. This Legislature saw fit to institute this system and it has been up and operating and that was funded by a mix of money from long-distance charges and part of an access-line charge. An access-line charge is basically a small fee that every time you get on the line or you use the line or your monthly statement I guess I should say, is that you have a fee for the access, and that has been 10 cents a line. What this committee amendment does is take it from 10 cents to 25 cents. The Public Service Commission will have the authority, each fall they set what that amount should be. They contract with one telephone company which happens to be Hamilton Telephone Company right now in the State of Nebraska for the service. This funds an 800 number and the use of their operators to assist in allowing people with the hearing impaired to be able to use the telephone, a telecommunications service with each other and with actually any citizens in the State of Nebraska as they do that. What the committee amendment does one other thing, it eliminates the surcharges for the long-distance charges for using this as a